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REMARKS

Claims 1 to 27 are pending. No claims are allowed. However, claims 2, 4 to 6, 8, 9, 13, 17, 19 to 21 and 23 are objected to.

Claims 24 to 27 are new.

1. The abstract has been amended to place it in a narrative form.

2. Claims 5, 14 and 20 are objected to because of an informality regarding the "annular spring". These claims have been amended to clear up the noted informality.

Reconsideration of this objection is requested.

3. Claims 1, 12, 14, and 15 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. The indefinite language noted in them has been amended.

Reconsideration of this rejection is requested.

4. Claims 1, 3, 7, 10 to 12, 16, 18 and 22 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Dantanarayana (U.S. Patent No. 5,336,246). Dantanarayana describes a lead connector assembly for a medical device. The medical device comprises a sealed case 3 supporting a feedthrough assembly 17 including a plurality of conductive pins 20-23. The connector assembly 5 comprises a pre-cast epoxy shell 40 supporting a plurality of terminal blocks 42-45, a socket housing 46, and connecting wires 57-60 supported by an epoxy back fill 61 and leading from the terminal blocks 42-45 to the socket housing 46. Electrical leads 48 and 49 plug into the terminal blocks and lead to the patient.

The socket housing 46 is a sub-assembly of the connector assembly 5 and comprises through holes that accommodate

respective metallic conductive electrical socket members 50-53. The socket terminals 50-53 are spot welded to the connecting wires 57-60 supported by the back fill 61. When the connector assembly 5 and case 3 are assembled together, the socket members 50-53 receive the respective electrical terminal portions 20a-23a of the conductive pins 20-23 of the medical device 3. As described at column 5, lines 3 to 13, the lead connector assembly 5 is built by placing the socket housing 46 inside a cavity in the connector assembly 5 "and the ends of the connecting wires 57-60 remote from the socket terminals 50-53 are welded to the respective terminal blocks. At this point the socket housing 46 and the terminal blocks 42-45 are aligned relative to the connector assembly shell and the shell is filled with epoxy 61 (Fig. 6) to fill in the gaps [between the epoxy shell 40 and the socket housing 46] thereto, completing the processing of forming the connector assembly 5."

In that light, Dantanarayana's lead connector assembly comprises an epoxy shell 40 spaced from the socket housing 46 by an intermediate epoxy back fill portion 61 that encases the connections between the distal ends of the connecting wires 57-60 and the terminal blocks 42-45 and between the proximal ends of the wires 57-60 and the socket terminals 50-53. As described at column 5, lines 17 to 44, final assembly is then accomplished by applying an adhesive to complimentary surfaces of the feedthrough assembly 17 of case 3 or to a corresponding end surface 62 of the socket housing 46 of the connector assembly 5. At this time, "the terminal pins 20a-23a are plugged into the sockets 50-53 when the connector assembly 5 and sealed case 3 are brought into contact with one another. Thus, when the connector assembly 5 is plugged into the case 3, the socket terminals 50-53 of the connector assembly provide positive electrical connection with the feed-through pins 20-23 of the case and, thus, electrical signals are conducted between the electronics module 15 of the

case 3 and the terminal blocks 42-45 of the connector assembly 5."

In contrast, applicants' header assembly set forth in amended independent claim 1 comprises a body having a sidewall extending to a bottom wall. A connector inlet is provided in the body sidewall in communication with the bottom wall. That way, when the body is moved into close proximity to the medical device, the proximal end of the intermediate conductor, which is exposed through the body bottom wall, is directly connectable to the distal end of a feedthrough wire extending outside the medical device. Access to the connection is through the body sidewall. The connection inlet is then back filled after the connection. In Dantanarayana, the connection between the wires 57-60 and the socket terminals 50-53 takes place where the intermediate epoxy back fill 61 is provided, which is not "a connector inlet [that] is provided in the body sidewall in communication with the bottom wall". It may be in the sidewall, but it is not in communication with the bottom wall. Further, in Dantanarayana the location of the epoxy back fill 61 is not where wires are connected to the device feedthrough wires, as called out in amended independent claim 1. Instead, that connection takes place when the terminal portions 20a-23a of the device pins 20-23 are plugged into the sockets 50-53. Independent method claim 16 has been amended in a similar manner.

Accordingly, amended independent claims 1 and 16 are patentable over Dantanarayana. Claims 3, 7, 10, 11, 18 and 22 are allowable as hinging from patentable base claims. Independent claim 12 is in a patentable form as it now includes subject matter from claim 13 that has been objected to.

Reconsideration of this rejection is requested.

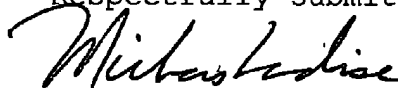
5. Claims 2, 4 to 6, 8, 9, 13, 17, 19 to 21 and 23 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In that respect, a portion of the subject matter of claim 13 has been amended into independent claim 12. Independent claim 12 is now in a patentable form. Further, the subject matter of claims 12 and 2 have been combined to provide new independent claim 25. The subject matter of claim 12 and 8 have been combined to provide new independent claim 26.

Allowance of these claims is requested.

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon has been reviewed. However, it is not considered more pertinent than the Dantanarayana patent.

It is believed that claims 1 to 27 are now in condition for allowance. Notice of Allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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